



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning**

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2015-2016**

**P.S. 059 The Community School of Technology**

**Elementary School X059**

**2185 Bathgate Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: Sita Basu**

**Date of review: February 11, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

## The School Context

P.S. 059 The Community School of Technology is an elementary school with 632 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 27% Black, 68% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 15% English Language Learners and 24% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.6%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Distributive leadership structures afford teachers and teacher teams the opportunity to make key decisions about teaching and learning as an outgrowth of their systematic analysis of student work products.

### Impact

The work, frequency, and variation of teacher teams, provide all teachers with opportunities to engage in shared leadership and professional collaboration resulting in improved teacher capacity and mastery of student goals for groups of students across the school community.

### Supporting Evidence

- Instructional teacher leads facilitate each teacher team meeting and separately meet with the coach to determine curricular and instructional adjustments. This leadership role includes collaboratively creating agendas, facilitating meetings as needed, delegating next steps, and meeting with administration.
- Staff determines the professional development opportunities, and provides many sessions for each other. Teachers also engage in staff development provided by consultants and coaches, both in the classroom and off-site, which is then turn-keyed back to grade teams.
- With the support of outside coaches, teachers engage in ‘massive practice, a two-week burst of teaching for students reading below benchmark’. In this reading cycle, teachers focus on four students on the same reading level with the same area of need, using small group shared and guided reading practices and measure growth via running records. Subsequently, a review of this granular data in team meetings helps teachers share best practices to determine any needed curricula and/or instructional revisions. Some students have demonstrated an increase of up to three reading levels. Furthermore, all teachers share the *Fountas and Pinnell* reading data with administration.
- All teachers meet multiple times weekly in inquiry, grade team meetings, professional learning communities (PLCs), measure of student learning (MOSL) teams, as instructional leads, and during common planning time. All times are built into the master schedule or after school. Teachers stated that they share best practices and support each other’s growth via this multi-faceted system. One teacher explained that she had gleaned a new structure for conferencing with students, which has helped her to better track data with each student who now has his/her own goal sheet, notes, and goals. She stated that a whole kindergarten class has made positive gains. The teachers agreed that they not only share best practices, but also curricula. For example, when working with targeted groups of students, teachers support other grade level staff by providing examples of relevant grade level work and strategies for students who are missing foundational skills and knowledge. Teachers then reteach so that their students can move forward to gaining grade-level mastery. Another teacher stated, and others concurred, “Team meetings help me to provide what my students need the most, whether it short vowel sounds or word work, it makes me a better teacher.”

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the school's articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

The school's alignment of pedagogy to the curricula and the engagement of all students including high performers, English Language Learners (ELLs), and students with disabilities, in challenging tasks, are not yet evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

### Supporting Evidence

- The administration and staff believe that students learn best when “they are actively engaged and thinking and questioning, so that students are not passive receptive but actively learning, building independent learners.” Across classes, students worked in small groups and demonstrated participation.
- Across classrooms, students were provided multiple entry points into the lessons including, tiered work, and participation in leveled groups. In a grade 2 math lesson, students received differentiated worksheets after the teacher worked with the whole class on using drawings to represent additions with three-digit numbers. Similarly, for a grade 2 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math lesson on the same topic, students worked in leveled groups, with tiered work, and used drawings on whiteboard slates to support their thinking. Students had opportunities to share their thinking about their work with partners to explain why the drawing must match the numbers. Students were engaged at all levels in both classes. In a kindergarten class students worked on identifying different types of matter, gas, liquid, and solid. The teacher reminded students of the anchor chart previously created by the class, and they worked together as partners to discuss the state of matter for certain items, in preparation to doing a sorting activity in leveled groups. In a grade 3 writing lesson, students used ‘boxes and bullets’ and some used the ‘Oreo’ persuasive writing graphic organizer to support their opinion writing. Students had a mentor text as an example and used that to help create their own.
- Although across classes most students’ work products demonstrated the instructional shifts and higher-order thinking, however some students were not provided these opportunities. In a grade 5 ENL writing workshop class, students worked on a draft essay using a variety of scaffolds including sentence frames and ‘boxes and bullets’. Student leaders at each table facilitated the group through each of the steps. However, the early finishers, who did not need to use the scaffolds, were not provided any tasks to extend their thinking. Similarly, in a grade 2/3 self-contained science class, students conducted an experiment regarding reflection and refraction. Students had a hands-on activity to help them visualize and note their observations on recording sheets. However, most students were able to draw the pictures only after other students shared their observations, an activity which took longer than 15 minutes, and as a result, many students did not have time to respond to any of the higher-order questions posed, such as, “Why did this happen?” Additionally, as noted in not only this, but also other classes, extensions were not provided for early finishers.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school creates and adapts rich, cohesive curricula in all content areas that is consistently reflected upon and refined to address the needs of all learners and incorporates ever-increasing levels of rigor.

### Impact

The school's commitment to analyzing student work and revising units of study to maximize coherence and to meet all student needs has resulted in a seamless educational experience for students that allows them to think deeply, make connections among and between subjects, be prepared for the next level of education, and be college and career ready.

### Supporting Evidence

- Staff adopted Common Core-aligned curricula using *EngageNY* for math, the *Teacher's College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP)* for English Language Arts, and the *New York City Department of Education Scope and Sequence for Social Studies and Science*. For interventions, teachers use *Letter People*, *Lively Letters*, and *Foundations* in the lower grades. Teachers use an agreed upon format, and a vast majority use an online programs to support lesson planning and coherence of format that includes certain components, such as unit information, Common Core Learning Standards, State standards, higher-order thinking questions, teaching points or "I can" statements, modeling, groupings, materials, attachments, planned questions, potential student answers and misconceptions, homework, and objectives for and how to set up centers.
- The school's programs are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, and include overt evidence of the instructional shifts such as the planning of using real-life problems in math and a shared reading plan in grades 3 through 5 with an emphasis on nonfiction. To ensure that the focus was strategic at the beginning of the year, teachers analyzed student data from the New York State assessments, determining, which standards students demonstrated the greatest need. Thus, there is a coherent emphasis on college and career readiness, even at the youngest grade levels. All teachers receive targeted training for implementation of the curricula. Staff and coaches reflect after each lesson in order to help them refine, revise, and readjust lessons, with a consistent eye towards tailoring the work to students' needs and improving student learning outcomes. From this strategic work, teachers determine additional supports, scaffolds, extensions, and student groupings, so that there is consistent cognitive engagement.
- Teachers create reading and writing end-dates for each unit, as displayed in each of the curriculum maps reviewed across grades, while some subjects include essential questions. At the end of each module, administered assessments provide teachers with data that they use to complete data grids and trends sheets to determine next steps for students, and consequently align curricular changes accordingly. The data is used to determine students' needs and to look for trends and patterns to determine the extent of the need. Thus, teachers work to ensure that curricula is rigorous and provide all students opportunities to demonstrate their thinking.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments that measure students' progress of acquired skills that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, rubrics, and there is a common grading policy aligned to the school's curricula.

### Impact

The school analyzes assessment results to adjust instruction and curricula to meet student-learning needs. Common assessments provide a mutual shared lens and language to discuss student progress, allow staff to give uniform actionable feedback, and inform instructional adjustments that result in student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create and use classroom data walls with school-wide parameters defined by the administration. These data walls, also referenced by students, are aligned to the school-wide goals and linked to teachers' and students' goals, and evidenced positive trends across grades for writing. The school also has established a yearlong schedule of how often each grade collects certain data points, including running records, writing unit scores, writing on-demand, MOSL, pre-assessments, mid-module, end-of-module assessments, and exit tickets. Additionally, *Fountas and Pinnell (F&P)* running record reading levels are formally administered five times per year and displayed on a class grid in each classroom. Thus students are able to use the information to develop relevant reading goals while conferencing with their teachers. Similarly, teachers formally assess writing seven times per year using the Teacher's College Writing Units of Study, using a school-wide focus on elaboration and craft that is explicitly referenced in a school-designed rubric.
- When explaining "Massive Practice" teachers stated that to "wait a month to determine student achievement, is too long and the reaction is too late, so if we do the cycle of 'teach:analyze:reteach' [based on data], then we can constantly see the growth and especially look at the data and answer 'why did they move 2 to 3 levels?'. From there we work together to figure out which strategy worked for them." Another teacher stated, "Most of my kids were stuck on level 'f' and some moved to 'g' or 'h' because those kids paid attention to the story and what the characters were doing and not the pictures. The students who remained stagnant relied too much on the pictures and veered off the story because they were not focusing on words and relied on one or two words. Those who were able to move one or two levels used a strategy that helped them." Math teachers monitor student progress through module assessments and disaggregated data. From the analysis, they determine trends and next instructional steps. As a result, across grades teachers are seeing positive trends for most groups of students. However, although teachers are able to demonstrate positive growth, they are not yet able to demonstrate increased mastery of all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.
- Teachers use common assessments, rubrics, and an assessment calendar, sharing data with administration to determine additional supports for students at the class level. At the beginning of the year, teachers implemented the *F&P* assessment to set students reading goals. All students know their reading level that is used to set their goal. When asked why they were in this group for an assignment, students all answered, "We are in this group because of our reading scores" and pointed to posted reading groups. A detailed analysis of the reading scores led staff and coaches to develop the "Massive Practice" method.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide them with training to achieve such. Expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness are communicated by staff and school leaders as they partner with parents.

### Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability to support student progress toward high expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared that they are able to contact teachers directly through either *ClassDojo* or the school’s new website application, which has been live for over a month. Both of these venues are online programs allowing them to receive direct responses to support them helping their children in completing homework or projects, or in providing additional supportive assignments. One parent stated, and others agreed, “The school-wide application helps keep me up-to-date on what is going on in the school and it is like a little family here where we all work together for the kids.” On the schoolwide application, parents find communications from the school, grade-level newsletters, as well as information directly from the teacher. From these communiqués parents stated that they partner with the staff to collaborate in their children’s academic growth. For example, parents spoke of coming in to the school for appointments with teachers to learn how to support their children in the areas in which they are having difficulty.
- Teachers stated that they consistently communicate to families regarding their children’s progress toward expectations. Communications include phone calls, emails, texts, backpacked letters, grade-team newsletters, and notifications through *ClassDojo* and the school-wide application. Teachers stated that since the application is new, they still send paper communications to have the information in more than one place.
- Workshops have been provided for parents to help them understand the middle school application process. Students were able to speak about the middle school application process, support provided to them to attend the school fairs, and the selection process. Parents and students discussed attending college visits and shared how helpful these are in understanding being college and career ready. Parents also spoke about attending ‘Coffee with the Principal’, where they discuss current issues. Some students spoke about working with college tutors after school. Administration spoke of college students who meet with fifth graders discussing college skills.
- The administration provides consistent communications to all staff through a multitude of measures including bulletins, staff handbook, and professional development. Some of these include school-wide expectations for use of classroom data walls, assessments, collections of writing samples, lesson plans, conferring notes, student notebooks, bulletin boards, and student reading logs. Support by administration to implement these expectations comes through a consistent cycle of observations and actionable feedback. Data collected then informs the professional development plan and teachers and teacher leaders create and present the professional development. Additionally, teachers have both reading and writing goals. As a result of the focused writing goals, data shows that all grades show growth in similar genres, while grade 3 students with special needs have shown strong growth, and grade 4 students have shown more consistency in the writing process and products across the grade.